

In the Claims

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3 **1. (Currently Amended)** A method comprising:
4 transmitting a query with a computing device in a domain;
5 receiving, with the computing device, a response to the query from one or
6 more neighbor-casting (NC) groups in the domain each including one or more said
7 computing devices;
8 applying, with the computing device, a predetermined criteria to select one
9 said NC group; ~~and~~
10 joining the computing device to the selected NC ~~group~~; group; and
11 when a length of time between a subsequent query from the computing
12 device and other computing devices in the selected NC group exceeds a
13 predetermined threshold:
14 removing the computing device from the initial NC group; and
15 joining the computing device to a different NC group.
16
17 **2. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the predetermined
18 criteria is selected from the group consisting of:
19 the number of said computing devices in the selected NC group;
20 a length of time between the query and the response from the selected NC
21 group; and
22 a combination of the foregoing.
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1 **3. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein each said NC group
2 has an identifier that is unique to other said NC groups in the domain.

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4 **4. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein each said computing
5 device is selected from among a video game console, a set top box, an automatic
6 teller machine, a Personal Digital Assistance (PDA), a Personal Computer (PC), a
7 cellular telephone, a printer, a facsimile machine, a copier, a multifunction
8 peripheral device, and a server.

9
10 **5. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein each said response
11 to the query is transmitted by one said computing device in a respective said NC
12 group.

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14 **6. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the query is
15 transmitted over a TCP network with a broadcast or multicast.

16
17 **7. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the predetermined
18 criteria to select one said NC group ignores each said response from any said NC
19 group for which the length of time between the query and the response exceeds a
20 predetermined maximum.

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22 **8. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein:
23 each said response includes the number of computing devices in the
24 responding said NC group; and
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the predetermined criteria to select one said NC group ignores any said NC group for which the response includes the number of computing devices in the responding said NC group that exceeds a predetermined maximum.

9. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 8, wherein each said response includes an identifier that is unique to the responding said NC group in the domain.

10. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein one or more of the transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by a component of an operating system of the computing device that is joined to the selected NC group.

11. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 10, wherein each of the transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by the operating system of the computing device joined to the selected NC group.

12. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein one or more of the transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by an application that is running on the computing device joined to the selected NC group.

13. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the applying further comprises determining at least one of:

1 a closest said NC group for which the corresponding response was first to
2 be received; and

3 a smallest said NC group that has the least number of the computing
4 devices from among those said NC groups for which the response was received.
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6 **14. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 13, wherein the applying
7 further comprises selecting the one said NC group to be the smallest said NC
8 group when the closest said NC group is more than one said NC group.
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10 **15. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 1, wherein the applying further
11 comprises ordering said NC groups for which a corresponding said response was
12 received according to:

13 the length of time between the query and the corresponding response;
14 and

15 a number that quantifies the computing devices in the corresponding NC
16 group as is contained in the corresponding response.
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18 **16. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 15, wherein:

19 the predetermined criteria to select one said NC group ignores each said
20 response from any said NC group for which the length of time between the query
21 and the response exceeds a predetermined maximum; and

22 the selected NC group is selected by a condition that is selected from the
23 group consisting of:
24
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1 the length of time between the query and the corresponding response
2 is least;

3 the number of said computing devices contained in the
4 corresponding response is least; and

5 the number of members contained in the corresponding response is
6 least when more than one said NC group had the least length of time between the
7 query and the corresponding response.

8
9 **17. (Original)** A computer-readable medium comprising instructions that,
10 when executed by a computer, performs the method of Claim 1.

11
12 **18. (Currently Amended)** A method comprising:

13 transmitting a query with an initial computing device in a domain, wherein
14 the initial computing device is in an initial NC group that contains a number of
15 said computing devices that are also in the domain, ~~and wherein the number is less~~
16 ~~than a predetermined threshold;~~

17 receiving, with the initial computing device, a response to the query from
18 one or more said NC groups in the domain each including one or more said
19 computing devices;

20 if a latency in response times between the initial computing device and
21 other computing devices within the initial NC group is unacceptable, then;

22 applying, with the computing device, predetermined criteria to select
23 one of the one or more said NC group groups;
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1 removing the initial computing device from the initial NC group;
2 and

3 joining the initial computing device to the selected NC group,
4 wherein computing devices within the selected NC group have a latency in
5 response time with the initial computing device that is acceptable.
6

7 **19. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein the predetermined
8 criteria to select the one said NC group is selected from the group consisting of:

9 the number of said computing devices in the selected NC group;
10 a length of time between the query and the response from the selected NC
11 group; and
12 a combination of the foregoing.
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14 **20. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein each said NC
15 group has an identifier that is unique to other said NC groups in the domain.
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17 **21. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein each said
18 computing device is selected from among a video game console, a set top box, an
19 automatic teller machine, a PDA, a PC, a cellular telephone, a printer, a facsimile
20 machine, a copier, a multifunction peripheral device, and a server.
21

22 **22. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein each said response
23 to the query is transmitted by one said computing device in a respective said NC
24 group.
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2 **23. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein the query is
3 transmitted over a TCP network with a broadcast or multicast.

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5 **24. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein the predetermined
6 criteria to select one said NC group ignores each said response from any said NC
7 group for which the length of time between the query and the response exceeds a
8 predetermined maximum.

9
10 **25. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein:
11 each said response includes the number of computing devices in the
12 responding said NC group; and
13 the predetermined criteria to select one said NC group ignores any said NC
14 group for which the response includes the number of computing devices in the
15 responding said NC group that exceeds a predetermined maximum.

16
17 **26. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 25, wherein each said response
18 includes an identifier that is unique to the responding said NC group in the
19 domain.

20
21 **27. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein one or more of the
22 transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by a
23 component of an operating system of the initial computing device.
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1 **28. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 27, wherein each of the
2 transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by the
3 operating system of the initial computing device.

4
5 **29. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein one or more of the
6 transmitting, the receiving, the applying, and the joining are executed by an
7 application that is running on the initial computing device.

8
9 **30. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein the applying
10 further comprises determining at least one of:

11 a closest said NC group for which the corresponding response was first to
12 be received; and

13 a smallest said NC group that has the least number of the computing
14 devices from among those said NC groups for which the response was received.

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16 **31. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 30, wherein the applying
17 further comprises selecting the one said NC group to be the smallest said NC
18 group when the closest said NC group is more than one said NC group.

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20 **32. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 18, wherein the applying
21 further comprises ordering said NC groups for which a corresponding said
22 response was received according to:

23 the length of time between the query and the corresponding response;
24 and
25

1 a number quantifying the computing devices in the corresponding NC
2 group as is contained in the corresponding response.

3
4 **33. (Original)** The method as defined in Claim 32, wherein:

5 the predetermined criteria to select one said NC group ignores each said
6 response from any said NC group for which the length of time between the query
7 and the response exceeds a predetermined maximum; and

8 the selected NC group is selected by a condition that is selected from the
9 group consisting of:

10 the length of time between the query and the corresponding response
11 is least; a number of said computing devices in the corresponding NC group as
12 contained in the corresponding response is least; and

13 the number of members contained in the corresponding response is
14 least when more than one said NC group had the least length of time between the
15 query and the corresponding response.

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17 **34. (Original)** A computer-readable medium comprising instructions that,
18 when executed by a computer, performs the method of Claim 18.

19
20 **35. (Original)** A method comprising:

21 transmitting a query with an initial computing device in a domain, wherein
22 the computing device is in an initial NC group that contains a number of said
23 computing devices in the domain;

1 receiving with the initial computing device a group response to the query
2 from one or more related said computing device that are in the initial NC group;
3 and;

4 when a length of time between the query and each said group response
5 exceeds a predetermined threshold, removing the initial computing device from
6 the initial NC group.

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8 **36. (Currently Amended)** The method as defined in Claim 35, wherein [[the]]
9 removing the initial computing device from the initial NC group is done according
10 to a predetermined criteria [[is]] which includes a length of time between the
11 query and the group response.

12
13 **37. (Original)** A computer-readable medium comprising instructions that,
14 when executed by a computer, performs the method of Claim 35.

15
16 **38. (Currently Amended)** A method comprising:
17 transmitting a query with an initial computing device in a domain, wherein
18 the initial computing device is in an initial NC group that contains a number of
19 said-computing devices in the domain;

20 receiving with the initial computing device:
21 a group response to the query from one or more related said
22 computing device-devices that are in the initial NC group; and
23 an other group response to the query from one or more NC groups in
24 the domain each including one or more said-computing devices; *devices;
25

when a length of time between the query and each said group response exceeds a predetermined threshold:

applying, with the initial computing device, a predetermined criteria to select one said NC group other than the initial NC group, wherein the predetermined criteria is selected from the group consisting of:

the number of said computing devices in the selected NC group;

a length of time between the query and the other group response from the selected NC group; and

a combination of the foregoing;

removing the initial computing device from the initial NC group; and

joining the initial computing device to the selected NC group; and

updating software on computing devices in the selected NC group, wherein the updating comprises deploying software, uninstalling software and providing security patches to installed software, and wherein the software updating includes setting the predetermined criteria to locate computing devices within the selected NC group according to backup needs of computing devices within the NC group.

39. (Original) The method as defined in Claim 38, wherein:

the predetermined criteria to select one said NC group ignores each said other group response from any said NC group for which the length of time between the query and the other group response exceeds a predetermined maximum; and

1 the selected NC group is selected by a condition that is selected from the
2 group consisting of:

3 the length of time between the query and the corresponding other
4 group response is least; or

5 a number of said computing devices in the corresponding NC group
6 as in contained in the corresponding other group response is least; and

7 the number of members as contained in the corresponding other
8 group response is least when more than one said NC group had the least length of
9 time between the query and the corresponding other group response.

10
11 **40. (Original)** A computer-readable medium comprising instructions that,
12 when executed by a computer, performs the method of Claim 38.